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Report of the Executive Board of the United Nations Children's Fund on the work of its annual session of 2012*

(5-8 June 2012)

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Contents

		Page
I.	Organization of the session	3
	A. Opening statements by the President and the Executive Director	3
	B. Adoption of the agenda	4
II.	Deliberations of the Executive Board	5
	A. Annual report of the Executive Director: progress and achievements against the medium-term strategic plan, 2006-2013	5
	B. Report on the progress of gender equality work in UNICEF	7
	C. Proposals for UNICEF programme cooperation	8
	D. Report of the Ethics Office	14
	E. Annual report on the evaluation function and major evaluations	14
	F. Office of Internal Audit annual report for 2011 to the Executive Board	15
	G. Reports of the field visits of the Executive Board	16
	H. Address by the Chairperson of the UNICEF Global Staff Association	18
	I. Other matters	18
	J. Adoption of draft decisions	20
	K. Closing statements by the Executive Director and the President	20
Annex		
	Decisions adopted by the Executive Board at its annual session of 2012	21

I. Organization of the session

A. Opening statements by the President and the Executive Director

1. The President of the Executive Board of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) said that the session was taking place within the context of the upcoming United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), the post-2015 agenda, the quadrennial comprehensive policy review and the development of the next UNICEF medium-term strategic plan. UNICEF was seizing these opportunities to place children high on the global agenda, and Executive Board members could do the same to make the case for reaching all children, especially the poorest and most vulnerable. He commended the Executive Director for leadership on the equity agenda, for finding better ways to monitor results, and for making UNICEF a more innovative and efficient organization. Evidence of these efforts could be seen in nearly every agenda item for the session.

2. In his opening remarks, the Executive Director said UNICEF had been discussing the relationship between children's rights and equity, and between the equity strategy and human rights-based programming. It had been agreed that children's rights and equity were basically consistent and that, more importantly, results, not rhetoric, were the best measure of the organization's seriousness about children's rights. Over the past year, UNICEF had refocused its country programmes on equity, as seen in the country programme documents on the agenda.

3. As UNICEF continued to work on the medium-term strategic plan, it was focusing on putting results for children at the heart of the plan, with a distinction between goals and the means to achieve them. This would help to achieve greater strategic clarity and enable UNICEF to link its work more clearly to developmental results. UNICEF would continue to engage with Member States, United Nations agencies, development partners, national committees for UNICEF and others as it worked to develop a concise, medium-term strategic plan.

4. UNICEF was approaching the quadrennial comprehensive policy review in a similar way. It was important to concentrate on achieving practical results. United Nations agencies could best achieve results through issue-specific groupings when and where they were most relevant, as with the grouping formed by the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the World Bank, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and UNICEF (H5) on maternal health or the work of UNICEF and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization on education. United Nations coordinating mechanisms must be flexible, light and country-specific in managing a results-based, accountable approach.

5. "Delivering as one" must demonstrate and advance the relevance of the United Nations system in the changing development landscape, and UNICEF was committed to doing its part.

6. At the heart of sustainable growth was child survival, which had seen remarkable progress due to decades of sustained global efforts. To invigorate further progress, UNICEF would join the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), WHO and others at the Child Survival Call to Action conference in Washington, D.C., convened by the Governments of Ethiopia, India and the United States of America, which aimed to begin a new chapter in the global

effort to end preventable child deaths, in part by addressing the fact that much of the past progress had been inequitable. "A promise renewed", a global initiative launched at the conference, would ask all Governments to recommit to accelerating progress on newborn, child and maternal survival.

7. As UNICEF continued to mobilize funds to save the lives of millions of suffering children, it must not use images of dead or dying children in its campaigns. This was exploitative, and in the long run, it did not work. Over time, people became inured to harrowing images. Surely, the public was more responsive to pictures of recovering children.

8. Another priority for UNICEF was greater transparency, specifically with regard to internal audit reports. Applying this principle to internal audit made sense because it would mean greater accountability to donors, partner Governments and the public and bring UNICEF in line with the best practices of many national audit offices. In doing so, UNICEF was committed to protecting the privacy of individuals, the sovereignty of Governments and the integrity and quality of its internal audit reports.

9. The new Virtual Integrated System of Information (VISION) had been operational for several months, the result of intensive work in New York and all offices. The system would make UNICEF more efficient and focused, for example, by consolidating transactions.

10. In concluding, the Executive Director stated that, in all efforts, UNICEF must measure itself by one standard, which was to improve children's lives as efficiently and cost-effectively as possible. This included making the meetings of the Executive Board more efficient. He asked that in the coming months, the Board discuss environmentally sound and economically sustainable alternatives to its current practices.

B. Adoption of the agenda

11. The President noted that a draft decision prepared by the secretariat to respond to the request made by the Government of Rwanda to present a common country programme document to the Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UNFPA and the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) and the Executive Boards of UNICEF and of the World Food Programme (WFP) would be considered during the session. The Executive Board adopted the provisional agenda, timetable and organization of work for the session (E/ICEF/2012/9 and Corr.1).

12. In accordance with rule 50.2 of the rules of procedure, the Secretary of the Executive Board announced that credentials had been submitted by 37 observer delegations, including two intergovernmental organizations, the Standing Group of National Committees for UNICEF, 14 National Committees for UNICEF and six non-governmental organizations.

II. Deliberations of the Executive Board

A. Annual report of the Executive Director: progress and achievements against the medium-term strategic plan, 2006-2013

13. The report (E/ICEF/2012/10) was introduced by the Deputy Executive Director, Programmes, Geeta Rao Gupta.

14. Delegations expressed broad support for the leadership of the Executive Director and for the overall quality of the report. Almost all delegations commended the results achieved to date towards many of the Millennium Development Goals, especially in child survival. Many spoke in favour of the equity approach and UNICEF efforts to close widening gaps and unequal progress within regions and countries. UNICEF was urged to advocate the equity approach in the quadrennial comprehensive policy review, so that efforts could be prioritized and focused on the most disadvantaged children, both for moral reasons and because of the cost-effectiveness of such interventions.

15. UNICEF was commended for its leadership in and support for a number of key initiatives, including the United Nations Commission on Life-saving Commodities for Women and Children, the African Union campaign for accelerated reduction of maternal and child mortality in Africa, the Child Survival Call to Action and the Scaling Up Nutrition movement.

16. One delegation cautioned that not enough resources were being allocated to child protection. Speakers urged UNICEF to apply the equity approach to other areas, including those relating to street children and the empowerment of girls, and to areas where progress had lagged such as food and nutrition security, sanitation and health. Others welcomed the priority given by UNICEF to strengthening capacity at all levels for measurement and analysis of disparities, in order to generate reliable disaggregated data on the most disadvantaged children.

17. The secretariat was urged to continue consultations with Board members to define the road map for the medium-term strategic plan, including a review of results achieved at the country level. Through the medium-term strategic plan, UNICEF should take the lead in striving for focus and realistic expectations of development results, and coordinate closely with other United Nations agencies to ensure consistent and harmonized results, definitions and approaches.

18. Speakers suggested that the equity approach should be the foundation of the next medium-term strategic plan, along with a renewed commitment to rights-based approaches to programming, early childhood care and education, innovative approaches to programmes and new technologies, humanitarian action and coordination, and the changing role of UNICEF in middle-income countries.

19. A number of delegations commented on the "Delivering as one" initiative, which they said was a promising tool for better results at the country level. A speaker said that the quadrennial comprehensive policy review was about making the system work better together, but also about what and how it should be doing better in a variety of fields such as gender mainstreaming, transition from relief to development, capacity development and partnerships. Another delegation agreed that synergies within the overall policy framework of the United Nations system were important, but some basic paradigm differences remained in the contours of

the development approach, which must be premised on the principal of "no one size fits all".

20. Delegations noted improvements in results-based management and presentation of results. However, several expressed concern about the decreased number of country programme documents that met the results-based management standards in 2011. One delegation deplored the insufficient reporting on gender equality results by focus area, and the lack of progress in the key indicator of new country programme documents that meet organizational standards for the application of gender mainstreaming. The report could have benefited from a deeper analysis of lessons learned, trends and challenges, and a systematic overview of results that were not achieved and the reasons why. The report continued to show shortcomings in linking national outcomes to UNICEF initiatives.

21. Speakers welcomed the establishment of the Monitoring Results for Equity System (MoRES) and asked for clarification on how it was beginning to change the way UNICEF monitored performance and results. The Executive Director replied that the initial reports, expected in the fall, would identify barriers and bottlenecks to achieving results for children in the most disadvantaged communities. To avoid duplication of national statistical efforts, UNICEF was emphasizing the importance of cooperating with host Governments in working with MoRES.

22. Several speakers welcomed UNICEF commitment to stronger internal controls concerning risk awareness and planning, appropriate managerial and staff capacity and adequate programme monitoring. They requested more accurate information about risk assessment, including the types of risks faced and how they could be managed, specifically through more information on lessons learned, including a systematic chapter in the annual report.

23. Delegations welcomed UNICEF efforts to become more efficient, effective and transparent, including through the launching of VISION and its joining the International Aid Transparency Initiative.

24. Several delegations discussed their involvement in South-South cooperation initiatives, including technical training courses in child health and education. One speaker said that South-South cooperation was valuable but could not substitute for North-South cooperation.

25. Delegations welcomed UNICEF efforts to strengthen its systems in order to respond to humanitarian crises faster and more efficiently. One speaker stressed that scaling up activities in fragile States would require flexible programming and a comprehensive approach to risk management. Another commented about the lack of UNICEF candidates for humanitarian coordinator positions.

26. Delegations commented on the importance of further mainstreaming gender equality into the work of the organization, including the development of gender equality tools and measuring mechanisms. Others stressed the importance of child protection, and of a rights-based approach to ensure the rights and the empowerment of women and girls.

27. Speakers welcomed the UNICEF system-wide approach to education, its efforts to promote access to quality basic education for the most vulnerable children, and its participation in the Global Partnership for Education, particularly in fragile States. UNICEF had made great strides in reducing gender disparities in school

enrolment, retention and completion, and its work on early marriage and education offered promising models.

28. Some delegations expressed concern about the decrease in humanitarian contributions in 2011. Others worried about the low levels of regular resources compared to total income levels, and about the growing use of earmarking of funds. It was suggested that UNICEF and other funds and programmes consider ways to make contributing to core funding more appealing, perhaps a sliding scale of rates for recovery costs.

29. The Executive Board adopted decision 2012/7 (see annex).

B. Report on the progress of gender equality work in UNICEF

30. The report (E/ICEF/2012/11) was introduced by Deputy Executive Director, Programmes, and the Principal Adviser, Gender and Rights.

31. Delegations said that the report showed progress in almost all areas of UNICEF gender-related work, including building internal capacities and strengthening systems, accountability and data collection. Referring to the strategic priority action plan on gender, a group of delegations requested an overview of the progress against set targets. The accountability of UNICEF staff and management for the implementation of the strategic priority action plan should be addressed in future reports. They requested more information on the timing, scope and consultation process of the review of the strategic priority action plan, and welcomed the intent to strengthen the next strategic priority action plan through inclusion of qualitative data and a greater focus on gender equality results at the output and outcome levels. The next strategic priority action plan should be adequately funded from regular resources and include targets linked to time lengths.

32. Another delegation said the system of monitoring, establishment of benchmarks and the systematized collection of data disaggregated by sex was crucial to understand the real impact of policies and practices on the rights of young women and girls.

33. Delegations welcomed the collaboration with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) in piloting the United Nations system-wide action plan for the implementation of United Nations policy on gender equality and the empowerment of women. A speaker welcomed existing partnerships between UNICEF, other United Nations agencies, non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders.

34. Speakers asked for greater clarity about UNICEF policy priorities in relation to gender equality, including, for example, education, gender-based violence, early marriage, child labour and adolescent girls. It would be helpful if future reports were structured around progress and challenges in advancing these policy priorities. One delegation asked for an update on the strategy for involving men in gender equality efforts.

35. Speakers welcomed progress in implementing the gender equality marker as a key tool to track gender equality expenditures and results and requested information about quality control mechanisms built in as part of this tool. Some delegations noted UNICEF implementation of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee gender marker to track funding allocations for gender-responsive humanitarian action at the

global and country levels. They requested that the report on humanitarian work to be presented to the Board at the second regular session of 2012 include data on the level of funding for gender equality in UNICEF humanitarian work, and on gender equality results in UNICEF humanitarian programming.

36. Delegations said it was worrisome that programme expenditures in child nutrition and health did not contribute significantly to gender equality results, and urged UNICEF to propose solutions. Some delegations further stressed the importance of addressing gender equality in all areas of the medium-term strategic plan, particularly in relation to education in emergencies, health and nutrition, and water and sanitation. They also expressed concern about the uneven regional progress in conducting gender reviews of country programmes.

37. Addressing the issues of gender mainstreaming and gender equality results, two groups of delegations recalled Executive Board decision 2011/13, saying that UNICEF should continue efforts to increase the focus and reporting on results, including in country programme documents, and strengthen mechanisms of accountability.

38. Other delegations found that while the report included some very positive results, many of them were focused on outputs. UNICEF was encouraged to increase its focus on strengthening national capacities to collect, analyse and report sex-disaggregated data on key indicators for child well-being, particularly for child mortality; to report on progress in developing gender results and indicators for each strategic results area; and to systematically review its country programmes to address gender gaps and identify good practices.

39. A number of delegations raised issues about staff capacities and the possible need for enhanced training, skills- and capacity-building in the area of gender mainstreaming. Combining the goal of gender mainstreaming with other goals such as acquiring skills could encourage staff to be more engaged.

40. A group of delegations supported the target of 50 per cent of the senior management posts being occupied by women, globally, by 2013, and encouraged UNICEF to pay special attention to the Director level, while maintaining a comprehensive geographic representation of female staff.

41. Several speakers expressed concern about sexual exploitation and abuse by staff and urged UNICEF to install adequate response mechanisms as a matter of priority.

42. The Executive Board adopted decision 2012/8 (see annex).

C. Proposals for UNICEF programme cooperation

1. Draft country programme documents

43. The President announced that the Executive Board would consider 15 draft country programme documents and the multi-country programme document for the Pacific Island Countries. In accordance with decision 2008/17, the Board had been informed of the reasons for deferment of the presentation of nine draft country programme documents from the annual session to the second regular session of 2012, contained in document E/ICEF/2012/CRP.14.

44. Introducing the proposed country programmes, the Director, Programme Division said that three common threads ran through all of them: the organization-wide focus on equity, which was a practical expression of UNICEF commitment to the universality of children's rights; an appreciation that the country programmes would be operating in a period of transition in the global development sphere; and internal United Nations coherence which sought relevance, effectiveness, transparency and sustainability.

Americas and the Caribbean

45. The draft country programme documents for Belize, Bolivia (Plurinational State of) and Costa Rica (E/ICEF/2012/P/L.14-E/ICEF/2012/P/L.16) were introduced by the Regional Director.

46. The representative of Costa Rica said that, like other middle-income countries, Costa Rica faced important challenges in achieving its development goals, particularly in terms of regional gaps and the most vulnerable population groups. The country had achieved important breakthroughs for the rights of children and adolescents, but would continue to require international cooperation to address vulnerabilities, consolidate the progress attained and reach new and sustainable targets. UNICEF support was indispensable to national efforts to fight poverty, reduce inequality and strengthen health care and education.

47. The representative of Belize said that her Government had increased its investment in children, emphasizing access to quality education, health care and support to families, although the country faced a number of economic challenges and levels of poverty had increased. UNICEF had been pioneering and innovative in addressing the needs of children orphaned or otherwise made vulnerable by HIV/AIDS, in working with communities in the most disadvantaged areas, in building community ownership of development initiatives, and in providing technical assistance in data collection and policy formulation.

48. The representative of the Plurinational State of Bolivia said that the country had changed considerably, with a new constitution in force, considerable political stability and an immense number of social and economic advances. Per capita income had doubled, making Bolivia a middle-income country. However, maternal and child mortality had decreased only slightly. UNICEF was an important ally in these efforts, and was focusing on specific areas where the most vulnerable sectors lived.

49. Two delegations welcomed the general orientation and analysis of the situation of the most vulnerable groups in the Plurinational State of Bolivia, 60 per cent of whom were indigenous peoples. They encouraged UNICEF to strengthen the participation and accountability, and requested a deeper assessment of the protection environment and the status of human rights, especially with regard to women and children, more detailed information on strategies and activities for gender mainstreaming, and information on how UNICEF would prioritize its work under the general budget allocations.

Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States

50. The Regional Director introduced the draft country programme documents for Bulgaria, the Republic of Moldova and Romania (E/ICEF/2012/P/L.4-E/ICEF/2012/P/L.6).

51. The representative of Romania welcomed the document as a strong framework that reflected the progress made by her country in protecting the rights of children and the aspects that still needed improvement. In terms of the situation of children, Romania was now able to assist other countries with its knowledge and experience. This was the perspective of the new stage of Romania's cooperation with UNICEF.

52. A delegation said that UNICEF had identified the most pressing issues vis-à-vis children's rights and achieved convincing results in Romania. UNICEF had a unique edge in building bridges between the central and the local levels, strengthening local capacities, advocating for children's rights and promoting partnerships. UNICEF was well-placed to improve the lives of the most disadvantaged children, in partnership with the Government.

53. The representative of Bulgaria said the work of UNICEF in promoting reform in the child protection sector and in fostering the involvement of multiple stakeholders had been important, especially when the global economic crisis had negatively impacted the social system and rendered many people vulnerable. The Government had taken a proactive approach towards reforming childcare and the child protection system in line with the 2008 recommendations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child and European Union standards. Bulgaria appreciated the policy advice and assistance provided by UNICEF, especially with regard to the deinstitutionalization of childcare facilities.

54. The representative of the Republic of Moldova said that dialogue with the European Union had generated important reforms benefiting the situation of children, including, for example, a 40 per cent decrease in the rate of juvenile detention between 2005 and 2010. These results, which were in line with the recommendations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child, had been made possible with the support of UNICEF and development partners. Issues to be addressed by the new programme included migration, the care of children without a family or who were under care of a guardian, and the protection of children from the eastern districts of the country.

55. A delegation commended the work of UNICEF in the Republic of Moldova and welcomed the results achieved. Continued efforts to promote social inclusion and the protection of children were important. Children in rural areas, children with disabilities and Roma children were particularly vulnerable. Evidence suggested problems of child labour, sexual abuse and exploitation. The speaker welcomed the focus on systemic bottlenecks to access to social services and discriminatory attitudes.

East Asia and the Pacific

56. The Regional Director introduced the draft multi-country programme document for the Pacific Island Countries (E/ICEF/2012/P/L.7).

57. Several delegations commented on the complexity of the region and the limited capacities of these small States, which made the coordination of efforts critical. They welcomed the focus on vulnerability to natural disasters, violence against women and children, insufficient health care and lack of access to clean water. Protection of children from physical and sexual abuse and violence must be a top priority because of the lasting repercussions for mothers, children and families.

58. A speaker asked if the reference to five priority areas included a ranking or if they were of equal importance, and about the possible expansion of the child

protection component of the programme to cover all Pacific Islands. Another delegation requested more detailed information on the division of activities and resources between the 14 States and the different themes of the programme.

59. Delegations welcomed the integration of human rights-based approaches and gender into programming and commended UNICEF for its work in mainstreaming disability through its child-friendly schools initiative. They encouraged UNICEF to integrate an environmental perspective into its work wherever feasible, particularly in resource-poor environments. A delegate expressed appreciation for UNICEF cooperation in projects initiated by her Government, including a wide range of technical cooperation projects and immunization programmes in the Pacific region.

60. One delegation encouraged UNICEF to continue its cooperation with the Government of Vanuatu to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, because an important part of the population lacked access to potable water and sanitation and faced inequalities in terms of access to health care and basic education.

Eastern and Southern Africa

61. The draft country programme document for Lesotho (E/ICEF/2012/P/L.8) was introduced by the Regional Director.

62. The representative of Lesotho said that many children in his country were orphans as a result of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, suffered from malnourishment and lived in poverty. The Government had undertaken a number of initiatives to respond to the plight of children, notably the enactment of the Children's Protection and Welfare Act of 2011. UNICEF was an invaluable partner to Lesotho, especially in the programme for prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV, increased coverage of antiretroviral treatment for pregnant mothers and paediatric HIV care and treatment services. These efforts had resulted in the decline of new infections among children and had helped to keep those infected alive. In addition, Lesotho counted on the support of partners such as UNICEF in the realization of the goal of free primary education for all children.

63. A delegation said that it was important to develop more coordination and synergies between donors and development partners in both the HIV/AIDS and education sectors and asked for more clarity regarding those challenges in the country programme. In addition, the draft document could make greater reference to the importance of remaining in step with the National Strategic Development Plan.

Middle East and North Africa

64. The Regional Director presented the draft country programme documents for Djibouti and Jordan (E/ICEF/2012/P/L.9 and E/ICEF/2012/P/L.10).

65. The representative of Djibouti said that the country programme supported national efforts for the rights of children and women. The work of UNICEF in both humanitarian and development activities made it a key partner for the Government. The chronic drought in the Horn of Africa required an integrated approach because of the interlinked problems of lack of water and the food crisis, and their impact on the most vulnerable populations. She further noted that her Government had welcomed the joint field visit by the Executive Board of UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS and the Executive Boards of UNICEF, UN-Women and WFP, which was timely and fruitful.

66. The representative of Jordan said the draft document described some positive achievements for children in his country, although there were some gaps concerning the difficult economic conditions that Jordan and other countries faced as a result of the international economic crisis. Jordan was providing health care, education and protection services to refugee children of different nationalities, which added additional burdens to the infrastructure of the Jordanian State.

South Asia

67. The draft country programme documents for India, Nepal and Sri Lanka (E/ICEF/2012/P/L.11 and Corr.1, E/ICEF/2012/P/L.12 and Corr.1 and E/ICEF/2012/P/L.13) were introduced by the Regional Director.

68. The representative of India said that his Government valued the support of UNICEF for its national efforts, and expected UNICEF to continue to support major flagship programmes through the country programme. Early childhood care and education was an important area for UNICEF to support, within the framework of overall national policies and programmes.

69. A speaker said that his Government had contributed substantially to polio eradication efforts in India. Problems remained in terms of gender inequality and disparities among social groups and regions. Two delegations commended the emphasis on ownership and alignment, but said that the country programme could have a clearer focus on two or three topics to have greater impact; for example, on maternal health and nutrition and hygiene, where conditions, especially in rural areas, were especially challenging and India risked not achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Coordination with other donors and stakeholders in the country could be improved.

70. The representative of Nepal cited the Executive Director's recent visit to the country, during which he had seen both the challenges faced and progress made in taking forward the country's child agenda. Nepal had made significant progress in reducing infant, child and maternal mortality but faced challenges in mortality among newborns, chronic malnutrition and stunting, and health and sanitation. To narrow disparities between regions and various groups, the Government had embarked on an equity and rights-based approach.

71. Several speakers stressed that UNICEF should consider the unpredictable political situation in implementing the country programme in Nepal. A speaker said his Government's assistance to Nepal focused on poverty reduction in rural areas, peace consolidation and ensuring a smooth transition to a democratic nation. Two delegations raised questions about instruments and methods of programme implementation and budgetary issues. The revision of the national health policy should be considered in the framework of the current political situation and build on small, carefully planned steps in accordance with the current State-building process. Considering the limited resources, the target groups covering more than 70 per cent of the total population could be reconsidered.

72. Two delegations commended the programme's rights-based approach, careful analysis of the causes of inequality and alignment with national priorities and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework. They asked how results reporting would be aggregated with the new organization of programme component

results. They encouraged UNICEF to strengthen efforts to address the needs of children with disabilities.

73. The representative of Sri Lanka said that his country had sustained growth and social development despite a protracted and debilitating conflict, the devastating tsunami in 2004 and the global food, fuel and financial crises. The Government aimed to ensure that girls and boys in the North and the East were equal beneficiaries of the Millennium Development Goals, many of which had been achieved. A multifaceted reconstruction and development programme had made substantial progress in resettlement of internally displaced persons, restoration of schools and health facilities, rehabilitation and reintegration of former child and adult combatants, the development of infrastructure and restoration of livelihoods. The partnership with UNICEF was critical in these efforts.

74. A delegation said that while the Millennium Development Goals had nearly been achieved in Sri Lanka, disparities remained among different districts and the protection of children was an important issue. UNICEF support for reducing disparities and providing equitable and high-quality social services was appropriate. Two delegations said that the focus on primary-level educational achievements did not sufficiently address challenges to educational quality and the programme focus should expand to include secondary education. They called for attention to the situation of children working on plantations.

West and Central Africa

75. The Acting Regional Director introduced the draft country programme documents for Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone (E/ICEF/2012/P/L.17, E/ICEF/2012/P/L.19 and E/ICEF/2012/P/L.21). He dedicated his presentation to Sheila Mangan, a colleague from the Regional Office, who had died the previous week.

76. The representative of Liberia said that the document was the outcome of a very participatory and consultative process that had included children, youth and women's groups. The programme placed a strategic focus on equity, and over its five-year span, there would be a shift to prioritize the most disadvantaged and remote counties.

77. Delegations underlined the importance of continued coordination within the United Nations and even within UNICEF. They recommended further use of disaggregated data in programme development to maintain a focus on the rights of girls and gender equality. They also encouraged an emphasis on risk management in the planning and implementation of the country programme in order to achieve better results.

78. The representative of Sierra Leone said that his Government had introduced policies that would progressively continue to yield the positive results achieved. UNICEF had been a reliable partner in these efforts and continued support would be required to assist Sierra Leone's drive towards the Millennium Development Goals and peacebuilding efforts.

79. A delegation welcomed the strong role of UNICEF in health and nutrition and its lead in coordinating development partners on health, but cautioned against becoming overstretched in terms of human resources. It would be important to pay close attention to the Ministry of Health's system capacity.

80. The representative of Guinea said the priorities identified in the document would contribute to the implementation of national objectives and efforts to meet the Millennium Development Goals. In particular, the Government hoped to see accelerated efforts to build national capacities, especially in decentralization of health-care services for mothers and children.

81. A delegation stressed the importance of the sexual education programme in Guinea and also called attention to the theme of adoption.

82. The Executive Board adopted decisions 2012/9 and 2012/10 (see annex).

2. Extension of ongoing country programmes

83. The President announced that the Executive Board would consider the extensions of ongoing country programmes, contained in document E/ICEF/2012/P/L.22. The Board was informed of the one-year extensions to the Gulf Area subregional programme and the country programmes for Cuba, Mexico, Nigeria and Togo. In addition, the Board was requested to approve the second consecutive one-year extensions of the country programmes for Madagascar and Tunisia and the third consecutive one-year extension of the country programme for Namibia, as well as the two-year extensions of the country programmes for Colombia and the Comoros.

84. The representative of Colombia said that the two-year extension of that programme would be important for reducing existing inequality and aligning the country programme with the national development plan for 2012-2014. The representative of Mexico said that the one-year extension of that programme would allow UNICEF to work with the new Government, to be elected in 2012.

85. The Executive Board adopted decision 2012/11 (see annex).

D. Report of the Ethics Office

86. The report (E/ICEF/2012/12) was presented by the Principal Adviser, Ethics.

87. A group of delegations said that the work of the office had contributed to a deeper corporate ethical culture and greater understanding of ethical issues by staff at all levels. They expressed appreciation for the innovative web-based strategies used by the office to meet the demand for training and outreach. The increasing number of requests to the office indicated growing awareness of ethical issues among staff and management. The group asked that the office continue to track requests by category in future reports to allow for analysis and continuing adjustment to evolving demands. The outstanding level of compliance with the financial disclosure programme was a great achievement. They requested more information on the priorities of the office for 2012-2013 and further analysis on key challenges faced by the office at the headquarters, regional and country levels.

E. Annual report on the evaluation function and major evaluations

88. The Director, Office of Evaluation presented the report (E/ICEF/2012/13) and the Director, Programme Division presented the management response.

89. A group of delegations requested an overview of the workplan for the Evaluation Office for 2012-2013, information on the recently completed evaluation

of the human rights-based approach, more information about the results of evaluation and how recommendations informed programmes and policies, and clarification on the great variation of coverage across the focus areas of the medium-term strategic plan.

90. Delegations requested information on possible steps to increase the number of evaluations rated satisfactory or better. Others said that the rate of submissions of evaluation reports to the global evaluation database had reached a satisfactory level, but expressed concern that the number of total evaluations conducted decreased considerably between 2008-2009 and 2010.

91. Delegations stressed that regional and country offices must have the necessary capacity, staff and resources to carry out evaluation work. Part of the budget for evaluation should be reserved for the dissemination of evaluation findings internally within UNICEF and with Governments, civil society, private sector representatives and donors. A delegation said that the effectiveness of all activities had to be measured by their impact on reducing poverty. Equally important were efforts to strengthen national evaluation capacities, including through South-South cooperation.

92. Delegations encouraged UNICEF to strengthen decentralized evaluations through its regional offices. Any evaluation should automatically trigger a management response in order to make more practical use of the findings. Evaluations should be carried out efficiently with n UNICEF and jointly with other agencies, and results and recommendations should be shared within the United Nations system.

93. The Executive Board adopted decision 2012/12 (see annex).

F. Office of Internal Audit annual report for 2011 to the Executive Board

94. The report (E/ICEF/2012/AB/L.2) was presented by the Director, Office of Internal Audit (which has recently been renamed: Office of Internal Audit and Investigations). The management response (E/ICEF/2012/AB/L.3) was presented by the Deputy Executive Director, Operations, Martin Mogwanja.

95. A group of delegations noted that UNICEF took audit findings and recommendations seriously and was taking steps to address shortcomings. They requested that future management responses provide more detailed information on steps taken to address systemic issues, and statistics on the number of country offices rated as satisfactory and unsatisfactory. They also requested that future annual reports include concrete recommendations to address major management challenges.

96. Speakers welcomed UNICEF efforts to strengthen management and improve programme delivery and urged that reducing exposure to risk be a top priority. They also welcomed the commitment to review the risk assessment and management framework for UNICEF. They commended the Office of Internal Audit and Investigations for its transparency in handling investigation cases and for its close collaboration with the Office of Legal Affairs, the Division of Human Resources and concerned Member States. They encouraged UNICEF to hold individuals accountable and seek recovery of financial losses, and to give the Office of Internal Audit and Investigations the support needed to focus on fraud prevention. They requested that future reports include a breakdown of types of cases investigated in

the reporting year and in previous years, in order to analyse trends for possible systemic weaknesses in UNICEF operations.

97. Delegations expressed appreciation for the informal briefing note on steps for achieving full public disclosure of internal audit reports. One speaker recalled that the purpose of the audit function was to strengthen management and programmatic activities and the overall accountability of UNICEF.

98. Speakers requested information about the status of efforts to establish a roster of qualified professional candidates. UNICEF was asked to continue to strengthen its human resources initiatives, for example through streamlining processes, e-recruitment, talent pools and fast-track recruitment initiatives.

99. Delegations welcomed the efforts by the Audit Advisory Committee to align its charter with international best practices.

100. The Executive Board adopted decision 2012/13 (see annex).

G. Reports of the field visits of the Executive Board

1. Report of the field visit of the Bureau of the Executive Board to Sri Lanka, 25 February to 2 March 2012

101. The report (E/ICEF/2012/CRP.16) was introduced by Macharia Kamau, the Permanent Representative of Kenya to the United Nations nd Vice-President of the Board representing the Group of African States. He said they travelled to areas affected by the 30-year civil war in the North and North-east and saw the devastation to schools, hospitals, clinics and communities. They met government and community leaders, ordinary people and children of all ages. Even during the civil war, the Government had remained committed to supporting children and women in the areas affected by the conflict, supporting vaccinations and basic education. Now, a mere 18 months after the end of the conflict, Sri Lanka clearly had turned a corner.

102. The team learned that in spite of the difficult political situation, Sri Lanka was able to maintain some of the best health and education indicators in the region. Great strides had been made in water and sanitation. Child rights and protection systems were being rolled out in the north. The team also saw evidence of the humanitarian effort that now was winding down, and it was clear that UNICEF had worked well with other international organizations.

103. The team found that nutrition and child malnutrition were weak spots. The worst cases were in commercial tea plantations, but they saw that commercial companies were willing to work with government officials and communities to try to resolve the issue. The situation was serious, but the fact that the Government was open to discussing it was very welcome.

104. The representative of Sri Lanka expressed appreciation for the report presented by the Bureau on their visit and confirmed that his country had best practices to be considered by the rest of the world.

2. Report of the field visit to the Pacific Island Countries by members of the UNICEF Executive Board, 10 to 21 March 2012

105. The report (E/ICEF/2012/CRP.18) was introduced by Andrei Dapkiunas, the Permanent Representative of Belarus to the United Nations, who led the visit. He said the range of extremes in the Pacific region was one of the strongest impressions that the delegation brought from the trip. These extremes highlighted the degree of hardship in the subregion, especially in the remote outer islands. They also reflected the cumulative effect of developmental and environmental challenges facing the Pacific Island nations, challenges compounded by enormous logistical difficulties of operation in the region. The report included the team's observations about the innovative work by UNICEF and its partners and suggestions about practical aspects of UNICEF operations.

3. Reports on the joint field visits of UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS, UNICEF, UN-Women and WFP to Djibouti, 18 to 22 March 2012, and Ethiopia, 22 to 31 March 2012

106. Following introductory remarks by the co-team leader, Nojibur Rahman, Economic Minister of the Permanent Mission of Bangladesh to the United Nations, the report on the joint field visit to Djibouti (E/ICEF/2012/CRP.17) was introduced by the chief rapporteur, Patrick Duffy, First Secretary of the Permanent Mission of Ireland to the United Nations. The report on the joint field visit to Ethiopia (E/ICEF/2012/CRP.19) was introduced by the chief rapporteur, Lizwi Nkombela, Counsellor of the Permanent Mission of South Africa to the United Nations.

107. Mr. Rahman said that all stakeholders met by the delegation in Djibouti agreed on the need for better coordination at all levels, between United Nations agencies, between national and international humanitarian and development partners, between government sectoral initiatives and between the Government and the United Nations system. The visit to Ethiopia, a "self-starter" country as regards "Delivering as one", gave the team a real sense of the complementarity of interventions of the United Nations entities in the country.

108. Mr. Duffy said that the team's recommendations to the Executive Boards included: considering capacity-building strategies that would benefit sustainable development, particularly through income-generating projects; encouraging continued engagement with the Government in support of long-term durable solutions for the large number of refugees in Djibouti; considering an analysis of the feasibility of an in-country presence of UN-Women in Djibouti; considering further joint programming in the context of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework; and encouraging the United Nations country team to enhance contacts with civil society, support the Government's coordination policy and strengthen support for national planning for the humanitarian logistics hub proposed for Djibouti.

109. Mr. Nkombela said that the Government of Ethiopia played a leading role in coordinating the activities of the United Nation agencies and had shown strong ownership and leadership of the development process. The team encouraged the country team to increase communication with other development partners about the purposes and results of "Delivering as one" and to continue to support capacity-building. The delegation was impressed by the effective partnership between the Government, the United Nations and non-governmental organizations in providing humanitarian assistance to the large number of refugees in Ethiopia.

110. The representatives of Ethiopia and Djibouti expressed appreciation for the visits and the well-balanced reports of the members of the Executive Boards to their respective countries. The representative of Djibouti further noted that her delegation welcomed the recommendations of the report, and particularly those related to better coordination, the presence of UN-Women in Djibouti and long-term strategies for sustainable development. She remarked that it was her delegation's view that South-South cooperation should be considered as a complement to traditional cooperation and not as an alternative.

H. Address by the Chairperson of the UNICEF Global Staff Association

111. The Chairperson said he would like to convey three main messages from staff to the Executive Board. The first was to re-emphasize the staff's commitment to UNICEF, their pride in serving the organization and their appreciation to the Executive Director for his visionary leadership and outreach to staff at all levels. The second was to raise issues of concern to staff, especially related to staff safety and security, job security, staff mobility, staff working in hardship locations and equity in the workplace. He gave a detailed overview of each of these areas, focusing especially on the dangers and hardships faced by staff in many locations. Finally, he thanked the Executive Board for its support to UNICEF and its staff.

112. The Executive Director said that management had made progress on some of the issues discussed, but needed to make more progress on others. UNICEF was able to address some issues by itself but in other cases was required to operate under the rules of the General Assembly. He would continue to discuss them with the Board.

I. Other matters

113. The Secretary of the Executive Board introduced the provisional list of agenda items for the second regular session of the Executive Board of 2012, scheduled to take place from 11 to 14 September.

114. A group of 21 delegations noted the Executive Director's comments on the costs of documentation and recognized the substantial potential for savings that could be realized by improving the planning, management and conduct of meetings. They understood the impact of last year's decision by the Fifth Committee to transfer the cost of official meetings to individual funds and programmes and the resulting urgency to contain conference costs effectively. They welcomed the diligence of UNICEF to address the issue but said that UNICEF and its Board should carefully review the situation.

115. A thorough examination of potential savings regarding documentation and all other related costs would be extremely beneficial. UNICEF and the Secretariat should work with United Nations departments and other funds and programmes to examine options to limit costs. Cost-efficiency and effectiveness were important parts of the Board's governance responsibilities, but many Member States also viewed participation and interactive debate in the work of the Board as a key part of their oversight function. From that perspective, they would like to consider options

and solutions in the context of financing the quality of interaction and dialogue, sharing of knowledge and transparency in decision-making. Respect for the rules of the Executive Board relating to the work in the official languages and the availability of translated documents in a timely manner, were part of ensuring a conducive environment.

Thematic discussion on results and lessons learned in focus area 5 of the medium-term strategic plan: policy advocacy and partnerships for children's rights

116. The background document prepared by the secretariat (E/ICEF/2012/CRP.15) was introduced by the Deputy Executive Director, Programmes and the Associate Director, Division of Policy and Strategy.

117. A delegation said that advocacy and partnerships should focus on strengthening families, schools and communities to create an enabling environment for the development of children. Another stressed the importance of building the evidence base at the country level and of increasing linkages between research, policy, programmes and advocacy. UNICEF needed to use evidence to build partnerships and influence decision-making on legislation and resource allocation.

118. Several speakers underlined the importance of the Convention on the Rights of the Child to the work of UNICEF. The organization's strong commitment to child rights gave it credibility and had been the basis for building strong partnerships, for policy advocacy and for development results for children.

119. A delegation asked about the role of research in relation to evidence-based advocacy and how UNICEF was integrating the human rights-based approach in its advocacy work. The secretariat replied that the human rights-based approach emphasized understanding the situation of and strengthening engagement with children as part of their right to participation, and both were reflected in this focus area.

120. Speakers called for the continued participation of children in programmes supported by UNICEF. One delegation asked about efforts to promote children's participation at the local level, for example in schools, and about work in relation to the participation of girls and marginalized children and adolescents. The Executive Director cited information and communications technology as one example of how young people could report on conditions in their communities.

121. A representative of the Non-Governmental Organizations Committee on UNICEF said it was implementing a joint advocacy strategy that aimed to promote partnerships to support UNICEF priorities, situate child rights at the centre of the Millennium Development Goals and the post-2015 agenda, encourage the continuation of the mandate of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children and advocate on General Assembly resolutions related to child rights. Its members partnered with UNICEF in areas ranging from research and analysis on child rights to service delivery and programme implementation. The Committee was working closely with UNICEF to align its work with the strengthened equity focus. Additional efforts to streamline administrative and financial processes associated with partnerships would enhance the quality and effectiveness of relationships. She requested confirmation as to whether UNICEF would embrace proposals for global agreements for non-governmental organizations, and if so, what these agreements would look like.

J. Adoption of draft decisions

122. The Executive Board adopted decisions 2012/7 to 2012/13 (see annex).

K. Closing statements by the Executive Director and the President

123. The Executive Director recalled his comments at the beginning of the session about the importance of marrying practice to principle, equity and the rights of children. Looking at the 16 country programme documents approved at the session, he saw that each showed how, in practice, UNICEF was now working to serve the most disadvantaged children. Gender was also at the heart of an equity strategy, both beyond and within UNICEF.

124. The other principles running through the session's debates were transparency and accountability. The secretariat was doing its best to be transparent about the areas where improvement was needed. The reports on evaluations and ethics were also vital to transparency, as were relations with staff, both for accountability and for morale as UNICEF addressed difficult issues like consolidation in a difficult global environment. The decision on internal audit was another step towards greater transparency.

125. Ms. Nina Nordström, Vice-President, said UNICEF aimed to become more effective in reaching the poorest families and the most vulnerable children though the focus on equity. The focus of the post-2015 agenda in assuring a sustainable development for the next generation would be central to the ongoing quadrennial comprehensive policy review process and to the development of the new medium-term strategic plan. The results achieved by UNICEF were apparent at the session in the discussion of the annual report of the Executive Director and in the thematic discussion on policy, advocacy and partnerships for children's rights. She went on to review the discussions and decisions adopted at the session and in closing, urged Member States to continue to show their financial commitment to UNICEF and to help the organization utilize efficiencies, particularly at headquarters and in Board meetings.

Annex

Decisions adopted by the Executive Board at its annual session of 2012

2012/7
Annual report of the Executive Director: progress and achievements against the medium-term strategic plan, 2006-2013

The Executive Board,

1. *Takes note* of the annual report of the Executive Director of UNICEF: progress and achievements against the medium-term strategic plan, 2006-2013 (E/ICEF/2012/10);

2. *Recalls* its decision 2011/12 and reiterates its requests to UNICEF to introduce lessons learned and recommendations for future strategies of the organization and to include challenges and concrete steps to address these in future annual reports, and urges UNICEF to continue efforts to improve results reporting within the present medium-term strategic plan period by describing progress compared to plans, including more systematic references to risk assessment and mitigation as well as achievements from UNICEF efforts to enhance children's rights and gender equality within its programmes;

3. *Recalls* its decision 2011/10 inviting the Executive Director to integrate, in close collaboration with the chair of the United Nations Development Group, the implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action, in the programme of UNICEF, and to report on its implementation as part of the next annual report;

4. *Welcomes* the ongoing efforts to enhance results-based management, and in this regard, requests UNICEF to continue to consult with members of the Executive Board and to work closely with other United Nations entities, in order to develop a robust and harmonized results framework for the next strategic plan (2014-17), that is clear, simple and demonstrates a complete result chain with expected results at each level;

5. *Recalls* its decision 2012/2, and requests that UNICEF update the timetable set out in its road map towards the medium-term strategic plan, 2014-17, by including more details of the key actions and consultations to be undertaken;

6. *Acknowledges* the importance of reporting on gender equality results in all focus areas, as well as, with reference to Executive Board decision 2010/21 on human resources management, including recruitment that takes into consideration the necessity of securing the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity, while paying due regard to recruiting on as wide a geographical basis as possible in accordance with Article 101, paragraph 3, of the Charter of the United Nations, and reiterates the request to comprehensively integrate the results in relation to these issues in the annual report of the Executive Director.

Annual session
8 June 2012

2012/8
Report on progress of gender equality work in UNICEF

The Executive Board,

1. *Reaffirms* gender equality as one of the key cross-cutting strategies of the medium-term strategic plan of UNICEF;

2. *Welcomes* the report on the progress of gender equality work in UNICEF (E/ICEF/2012/11) and the steps taken to improve work on gender equality within UNICEF, including structural improvements, and through increased collaboration with other United Nations partners, in particular the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), including through piloting the United Nations system-wide action plan for implementation of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination policy on gender equality and the empowerment of women, led by UN-Women;

3. *Urges* UNICEF to continue to make improvements towards contributing to the achievement of gender equality results across all sectors and all country programmes, and to report on the contributions of UNICEF to improved gender equality results at national and global levels, in the context of the medium-term strategic plan;

4. *Requests* UNICEF to continue to work closely with UN-Women to advance gender mainstreaming, gender equality and the empowerment of women;

5. *Requests* UNICEF to inform the Executive Board of the findings of the review of the current strategic priority action plan for gender equality 2010-2012, as well as how these findings are being used to strengthen the next strategic priority action plan;

6. *Encourages* UNICEF to ensure that the next strategic priority action plan for gender equality is adequately resourced;

7. *Requests* UNICEF to continue to report on the progress of its gender equality work, in line with the strategic priority action plan for gender equality 2010-2012 and the successor to the plan, during the annual session of the Executive Board in 2013.

Annual session
8 June 2012

2012/9
Draft country programme documents

The Executive Board,

1. *Approves* the aggregate indicative budgets for the following country programmes of cooperation:

Region/country	*Period*	*Regular resources*	*Other resources*	*Document E/ICEF/2012/*
Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States				
Bulgaria	2013-2017	3 750 000	12 500 000	P/L.4
Republic of Moldova	2013-2017	3 750 000	20 300 000	P/L.5
Romania	2013-2017	3 750 000	12 500 000	P/L.6
East Asia and the Pacific				
Pacific Island Countries — multi-country programme	2013-2017	27 825 000	44 000 000	P/L.7
Eastern and Southern Africa				
Lesotho	2013-2017	5 260 000	40 000 000	P/L.8
Middle East and North Africa				
Djibouti	2013-2017	3 750 000	19 500 000	P/L.9
Jordan	2013-2017	3 600 000	8 000 000	P/L.10
South Asia				
India	2013-2017	210 000 000	540 000 000	P/L.11 and Corr.1
Nepal	2013-2017	34 160 000	109 952 095	P/L.12 and Corr.1
Sri Lanka	2013-2017	3 750 000	56 250 000	P/L.13
The Americas and the Caribbean				
Belize	2013-2016	3 000 000	3 500 000	P/L.14
Bolivia	2013-2017	6 760 000	60 000 000	P/L.15
Costa Rica	2013-2017	3 750 000	6 000 000	P/L.16
West and Central Africa				
Guinea	2013-2017	44 710 000	57 000 000	P/L.17
Liberia	2013-2017	23 470 000	126 530 000	P/L.19
Sierra Leone	2013-2014	17 286 000	97 712 335	P/L.21

Annual session
8 June 2012

2012/10
Request by Rwanda to present a draft common country programme document to the Executive Boards of UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS, UNICEF and WFP

The Executive Board,

Recalling its decisions 2002/4, 2006/19 and 2008/17 on the country programme approval process,

1. *Notes* the request by Rwanda to present, on an exceptional basis, a draft common country programme document, incorporating a common narrative with the organization-specific results framework and related resource requirements, to the first regular session of 2013 of the Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)/the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)/the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) and of the Executive Boards of UNICEF and the World Food Programme (WFP);

2. *Decides* to consider, on an exceptional basis, the draft common country programme document of Rwanda at the first regular session of 2013 of the respective Executive Boards;

3. *Decides further* that the final common country programme document will be posted on the websites of the respective organizations no later than six weeks after the discussion at the sessions of the respective Executive Boards;

4. *Emphasizes* that, in line with Executive Board decisions 2002/4, 2006/19 and 2008/17, the organization-specific component of the common country programme document will be approved, on a no-objection basis, without presentation or discussion, at the annual session of 2013, unless at least five members have informed the respective secretariat, in writing before the session, of their wish to bring the final common country programme document before the Executive Board.

Annual session
8 June 2012

2012/11
Extensions of ongoing country programmes

The Executive Board,

1. *Takes note* of the one-year extensions approved by the Executive Director for the country programmes for Cuba, Mexico, Nigeria and Togo, as well as the Gulf Area subregional programme, as indicated in table 1 of document E/ICEF/2012/P/L.22;

2. *Approves* the two-year extensions for Colombia and the Comoros, the second one-year extensions for Madagascar and Tunisia and the third one-year extension for Namibia, as indicated in table 2 of document E/ICEF/2012/P/L.22.

Annual session
8 June 2012

2012/12
Annual report on the evaluation function and major evaluations

The Executive Board,

1. *Takes note* of the annual report on the evaluation function and major evaluations in UNICEF (E/ICEF/2012/13);

2. *Reaffirms* the central role played by the evaluation function in UNICEF and the importance of the principles set out in its evaluation policy (E/ICEF/2008/4);

3. *Welcomes* the evidence presented in the report of continued efforts to strengthen the evaluation function at the headquarters, regional and country levels and encourages UNICEF to accelerate progress;

4. *Takes note* of the key performance indicators tracking the effectiveness of the evaluation function and the administrative data on human and financial resources;

5. *Notes* the positive work to strengthen global learning, including the skills, capacities and systems of national partners and South-South learning;

6. *Welcomes* the thematic presentation of recent evaluation results in child protection and the prevention of violence against children, and the management response;

7. *Recalls* decision 2011/20 and reiterates its request to UNICEF to ensure that management responses are prepared to address all evaluation recommendations and to report on progress in the implementation of management responses;

8. *Requests* UNICEF to:

(a) Undertake the proposed review of the evaluation function and evaluation policy, with a view to presenting an updated evaluation policy to the annual session of the Board in 2013 for discussion;

(b) Focus future annual reports on the performance of the evaluation function across UNICEF, including evaluation planning and resources, while preparing a separate report each year to the Board on a substantive theme synthesizing evaluation findings and lessons and illustrating their use by UNICEF;

(c) Ensure that relevant evaluation results are systematically considered and used in preparing key policies, strategies and programmes.

Annual session
8 June 2012

2012/13
Office of Internal Audit annual report for 2011 to the Executive Board

The Executive Board,

1. *Takes note* of the Office of Internal Audit annual report for 2011 to the Executive Board (E/ICEF/2012/AB/L.2), the Audit Advisory Committee annual

report for 2011, and the UNICEF management response to the Office of Internal Audit annual report for 2011 (E/ICEF/2012/AB/L.3);

2. *Welcomes* the focus on risk-based audit planning;

3. *Takes note* of the change of the name of the Office of Internal Audit to the Office of Internal Audit and Investigations;

4. *Expresses its support* for strengthening the capacity of the Office of Internal Audit and Investigations and requests management to ensure adequate and timely staffing;

5. *Recalls* paragraph 13 of its decision 2011/21 on internal audit and oversight, which requested Executive Board consultations on a broad range of possible transparency and accountability measures, including public disclosure of internal audit reports; and paragraph 12 of decision 2009/8 on specific circumstances where full disclosure would not be appropriate;

6. *Recognizes* that the independence of the internal audit function and transparency with respect to audits, financial reporting, risk management, and internal controls strengthens accountability and increases public confidence;

7. *Expresses its support* for greater accountability and transparency;

8. *Decides* that the Director of the Office of Internal Audit and Investigations will make publicly available all internal audit reports issued after 30 September 2012;

9. *Decides* that before making disclosure of an internal audit report that contains findings related to a specific Member State, UNICEF will provide a copy of the report to the concerned Member State and provide the concerned Member State with adequate time to review and comment on the report, as per paragraph 9 (b) of decision 2009/8, and in this context notes that where information contained in a UNICEF internal audit report is deemed by the Executive Director or the concerned Member State to be particularly sensitive (relating inter alia to third parties or a country, government or administration); or as compromising to a pending action; or as being likely to endanger the safety or security of any individual, violate his or her rights or invade his or her privacy, such UNICEF internal audit report may be redacted or withheld in its entirety at the discretion of the Office of Internal Audit and Investigations;

10. *Requests* the Office of Internal Audit and Investigations to include in its annual reports to the Executive Board the titles of all internal audit reports issued during the year and information on significant issues, if any, related to the public disclosure of internal audit reports; and to include in its annual report for 2014 an analysis on experience gained from public disclosure to date.

Annual session
8 June 2012